
Program Evaluation

2012-13

Dr. Marco Clark, Ed.D.



**RICHARD
WRIGHT**
PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL FOR
JOURNALISM AND MEDIA ARTS



LEA Annual Report

August 2013

I. School Description

Richard Wright Public Charter School (RWPCS) is an urban public high school which served approximately 210 students in grades 8-10. Richard Wright Public Charter School continues to be the only public high school in the District of Columbia or the surrounding metropolitan area that focuses on a Latin Based Curriculum accented by a Journalism and Media Arts program.

In order to address the reading and writing deficiencies of the population served, RWPCS utilizes the Classical languages, and Online Reading Software (i.e. Testourkids.com). Richard Wright Public Charter School also utilizes various benchmark assessments (i.e. Discovery Education, San Diego Quick Test and Internal Assessments), to increase reading and writing skills. The student demographic data reveals that 98% of our students are African American and 1% Latino.

RWPCS required an initial academic assessment (Discovery Education) in September of 2012 to determine growth and reading deficiencies after the summer break. The data revealed from this assessment revealed that sixty-four percent of our student population was at least three grade levels below in reading. Ninety-four percent of our students reside in the two quadrants which represent the largest population of people affected by low socio-economic status and illiteracy rate in the District of Columbia. Approximately 91.5% of its students receive free/reduced lunch. RWPCS also receives Title I monies from the federal government because of the high percentage of students at or below the poverty level. Unfortunately majority of these students have been educated in low performing schools their entire lives in these quadrants.

II. Mission/Vision Statement

The mission of Richard Wright Public Charter School for Journalism and Media Arts is to transform students in grades 8-12 into well-versed media contributors by providing a student-centered environment that connects them to the classics and modern languages and a curriculum focused on strong writing skills and vocabulary.

A. Summary of Curriculum Design and Instructional Approach

Richard Wright Public Charter School's (RWPCS) curriculum design is adopted and based on the highly noted Boston Latin School of Massachusetts. The curriculum design and academic model has been acclaimed for over 365 years. The Boston Latin School has maintained a strong curriculum centered in humanities. Its founders believe "the good things are the good of the soul". The Richard Wright Public Charter School's mission is to offer our students a curriculum centered in classic and modern languages. Boston Latin unequivocally supports our mission. We believe "the only good things are the good of our student." The standards are adopted from the District of Columbia Public School standards and aligned with the National Common Core State Standards. The standards are intended to provide a framework for planning, implementation and expectations for student outcomes.

Boston Latin's program of study is widely recognized for its ability to increase Reading comprehension and vocabulary development. These areas of Reading are essential and critical to the success of the students at Richard Wright. RWPCS reviews its curriculum bi-annually to ensure effective implementation of the Common Core State standards.

The instructional approach that is utilized by RWPCS is an interdisciplinary approach that focuses on infusing Latin, Journalism and Media Arts throughout each content area. The purpose of this design is to reinforce reading, writing and technology skills. Our instruction mirrors the 21st century learner with fidelity. The impact of this instructional delivery approach has yielded improvements in the areas of reading and writing as well as a promotional rate of approximately 91%.

The Classic program at RWPCS exposes our young people to the ancient Greek and Roman tradition of human ideals. It uses the languages, literature and art of the Roman/Greek civilization to promote, the following virtues one's impulse to self-interest, to live and treat others with dignity, and to participate responsibly in civic life. Through careful study of excellent thought, speech and deed from that ancient world, our students will acquire ways to understand themselves as human beings, who make sense of the present and conceive of a worthwhile future.

The instructional approach at RWPCS is also designed with the understanding that the best student outcome is driven by a spirit of exploration and creativity. Students who feel passionate about their schoolwork are far more likely to retain what they have learned. At all grade levels and subjects, students are engaged in independent projects. Teachers' approach their lessons understanding, the curriculum, is effective in preparing our students for future success. Teachers' present the relevancy of topics being studied. For example, students studying the Renaissance period will compare and contrast the invention of the typewriter to the computer while students studying the history of journalism will conduct chronologies about the evolution of print media.

Our students explore and apply principles of Character Education. For example, students might be encouraged to demonstrate how to create a caring school community by participating in collaborative learning activities with peers. Respect from all members of the RWPCS community is essential in maintaining a safe, environment conducive to learning. Students are challenged to delve deeply into the meaning and ramifications of these virtues. An advisor might challenge a student to develop his or her own personal moral code and how to apply it in complex situations.

RWPCS provides a strong academically-enriching and rigorous program that meets the needs of all of its students while impacting the community in a positive manner.

RWPCS' focus is to create great writers, journalists and productive citizens. Our commitment to education is to empower all students to become creative, innovative thinkers and learn at the highest level, regardless of their surroundings, ethnicity, socioeconomic status and prior education. Our educational program is designed to enhance creativity to ensure success in "transforming students in grades 8-12 into well-versed media contributors."

B. Description of Key Mission-Related Programs

The Richard Wright Public Charter School ROXIE (**Reaching Our Excellence in Education**) program encompasses the Journalism and Media Arts focus of our school. As Roxie, Mississippi was the birthplace of Richard Wright, ROXIE serves as the birthplace and foundation for investigative thought, creativity, questioning, skill building, understanding, innovation, and analysis. Through a hands-on approach to learning, we formed partnerships and gained instructors from the professional community. They provided exciting opportunities and experiences in and beyond the classroom. RWPCS students learn fundamental concepts and skills essential in the fields of Journalism, Broadcast Journalism, television and radio production, Film, Graphic Arts, Visual Arts, and Music Production.

At RWPCS, our journalism and Latin class coursework at all grade levels requires students to perform high-level conceptual tasks. We recognize that higher-level thinking is only possible with a solid base of fundamental knowledge and skills. Cognitive scientists describe this process as rendering skills and knowledge "automatic." Automatic recall of certain information is necessary for a student to succeed in sophisticated conceptual work. For example, a student must firmly grasp word roots and prefixes for effective oral, written, and visual communication and expression. We ensure that every RWPCS student has mastered these fundamental skills.

Students are instructed using Blooms taxonomy of higher order thinking skills moving from basic recall and knowledge to application of information.

Traditional skills such as reading, writing, note-taking, and discussion are effective avenues for student learning. Yet, our teachers design lessons with the understanding that students process material through a variety of intelligences.

Thus, in a class on poetry, musically-inclined students might write and perform raps using the literary principles they have studied. The most effective instruction often requires students to process material using their kinesthetic, interpersonal, musical, and visual intellectual capacities, in addition to their verbal and mathematical abilities.

C. Parent Involvement Efforts

RWPCS focuses on the importance of open lines of communication and family involvement to sustain our students'. The overall success of our Parent Involvement programs are facilitated through "Open House" recruitment sessions, information sessions, and new student orientation. RWPCS continues to reinforce our mission, philosophy, goals, expectations and efforts to successfully meet Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). RWPCS ensures that parents are aware of that teachers are highly-qualified according to HQT requirements. RWPCS staff is highly visible and vocal in informing parents of student achievements as well as challenges. In turn, we expect parents to hold us accountable for student success.

RWPCS is excited about the partnership that exists between the parents and school staff. This team work effort has afforded us the opportunity to establish a mutual respect and connection between all stakeholders. Teachers are required to contact parents regularly by phone or email about student progress and/or needed interventions. RWPCS teachers are expected to make weekly phone calls and record interactions in a log.

Information for parents will be delivered through the regular mail, email, and by students. Copies of communications are also available in the main office. RWPCS utilizes an online data system, for all communications and academic progress reporting of RWPCS data of any sort.

The atmosphere for parent-teacher conferences is inviting and relaxed. In addition to parent-teacher conferences, we conduct family listening forums monthly. The Head of School, Parent Community Liaison and other staff continually discuss strategies for parental involvement in the context of short- and long-term RWPCS goals and expectations.

D. COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

RWPCS also partners with community organizations that provide services such as continuing education, health and wellness information, job training and public utility assistance, to help parents address issues that may be interfering with a child's

success. In addition to this support, Parent surveys are administered throughout the year to plan, assess and collect data.

II. School Staff Characteristics- 2012-2013

Administration

Dr. Marco Clark -CEO/Head of School

Alisha Roberts-Charles- Director of Business Operations

Crystal Williams- Director of Performance Management

Brendetta Starling- Director of Curriculum Development

LaMarge Wyatt- Instructional Support Consultant

Helen Compton-Harris- Reading Specialist

Randi Thomas-Glover- Parent and Community Liaison

Michelle Santos- Journalism and Media Arts Coordinator

Jamila Alarcon- ELL Coordinator

Jerome Young- Dean of Students

Julian Goodman- Dean of Students

A. Number of Teachers

Total # 16

B. Number of Teacher Aides

Total # 1

Average class size

Total # 20:1

Qualifications and assignments of school staff

All staff members are assigned to their specific work area based on academic credentialing and work experience. All teachers fall under the requirements of the federal mandate of No Child Left Behind. Each teacher is required to meet the standards of a highly qualified teacher by either degree and or the praxis examination.

Staff attrition rate

Richard Wright has retention rate amongst the total staffing body of 98%. The retention rate of the entire teaching staff is 100%.

A. Salary range and average salary, for teachers and administrators

Teacher salary - \$57K

Administrator's salary - \$70K

III. Student Characteristics:

A. Student enrollment by grade level*

8th Grade - 35 Students

9th Grade - 94 Students

10th Grade- 87 Students

B. Student re-enrollment rate*

Our student enrollment rate is 91.3 percent.

C. Demographics (race, gender, ethnicity, ELL-status, special education status, FARM status, alternative risk factor classifications) *

African American - 98%

Latino - 2%

Male- 51%

Female- 49%

ELL- 1%

Special Education Status- Inclusion Model

D. Attendance (in seat attendance, average)*

Our in-seat attendance is 92.4 percent (SY' 2012-2013)

II. School Performance

Richard Wright Public Charter School provides a strong academically-enriching and rigorous program that meets the needs of all of its students while impacting the community in a positive manner. RWPCS prides itself in transforming students from some of the lowest socio-economic communities in the District of Columbia into college ready students.

An example of a challenge faced by RWPCS is the high percentage of students residing within the boundaries of Ward 7 & 8 where more than 40 percent of its children live below the national poverty level and/or receives some form of government assistance. Unfortunately for many of

our students, the public schools they have attended are located in this demographic area. A data check of the schools located in these quadrants post some of the lowest reading and math test scores in the city. The results of our inaugural year DC-CAS results, revealed a need to remediate, reflect and revise. After a thorough examination of all external and internal assessments, Richard Wright Public Charter School instituted a strong Friday School Success Academy and a Saturday Academy focused on addressing academic deficiencies.

RWPCS assessed all students' mathematics and reading skills by administering the District of Columbia Comprehensive Assessment System (DC CAS) to measure the performance of the school in conjunction with meeting Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) standards under the federal No Child Left Behind law; Discovery Education Benchmark (DE) for midterm examinations; the Scantron Performance Review Series for semester and final exams.

The Scantron Performance Review Series was used by RWPCS to identify student strengths and weaknesses, track gains and measure student progress. All incoming eighth- and ninth-grade students will take the Scantron Performance Review Series to obtain baseline data. All baseline data was used to understand where students are and take them where we need them to be.

Richard Wright Public Charter School students arrived in August 2012 with a wide range of reading skills according to transcripts. Since that was the case, Richard Wright Public Charter School (RWPCS) decided to use the San Diego Quick Reading Assessment to gauge students' approximate independent reading levels and begin interventions in targeted areas. The students showed wide a range of reading abilities from pre k through 12th grade. Seventy percent of the student population read 3 to 7 years below grade level.

This was a monumental challenge yet we persevered and at mid-year 70% of our students showed an increase in their reading levels. Fifty-six percent of our students showed impressive gains of 1.5% to two – three years growth in a 6 months period. Twenty-two percent grew at an average rate, and 18% percent remained the same.

Based upon formative assessments and a review of school records revealed that teachers worked with students to develop academic and personal goals. Teacher observations and team review of pre-and post-assessment were used to determine student performance expectations in most subject areas.

All students attended a study hall period to receive supplemental support in reaching academic and personal goals. Students participated in cooperative learning activities, read cross-curricular information, did independent study and worked on portfolio projects. In addition to written and oral assessments, performance products were used to assess learning and engage multiple intelligences.

Contracted service providers consulted on the preparation of the unit plans to ensure that students' area(s) of weakness are being addressed in the classroom. Related services and behavior modification programs were delivered.

Richard Wright PCS will accelerate 95% of student achievement to meet or exceed the Annual Yearly Progress (AYP) targets for proficiency of all students in Reading and mathematics by 2014. Implementation of best practices in all content areas, using a testing format that mirrors DC-CAS and remediation and enrichment built in the school day are tools we used to help our students to meet with success.

According to the Performance Management Framework, our 8th grade students were the only grade level whose test counted. Unfortunately, they did not meet 80% proficiency in math and reading. However, our ninth grade students tested at 53% proficiency in reading. We are extremely encouraged by this data and prepared a course of action to close these gaps.

Scantron Performance Series

40% of our students scored Advanced/Proficient in Reading

41% of our students scored Advanced/Proficient in mathematics

Discovery Education Benchmark

17.9% of our students scored Advanced/Proficient in Reading

22.9% of our students scored Advance/Proficient in mathematics

DC-CAS- SY' 2011/2012

23.3% of the 8th grade students scored Advanced/Proficient in Reading

53.2% of our 9th grade students scored Advanced/Proficient in Reading

30% of the 8th grade students scored Advanced/Proficient in mathematics

We learned from the first and second year that we must focus our instruction by using data to drive our instructional decision making. As a result of the changes and interventions incorporated we improved our DC-CAS percentage in the area of reading and composition. The area of mathematics remained a challenge. RWPCS has been reflective over the deficiencies in mathematics and therefore required a mandatory summer enrichment program focused on mathematics.

DC-CAS – SY' 2012/2013

49.6% of the 8th & 10th grade students scored Advanced/Proficient in Reading

30% of the 8th & 10th grade students scored Advanced/Proficient in mathematics

In SY2011/12, RWPCS educational leaders learned that we will need better alignment with our test instruments, more strategic analysis and better action plans. Richard Wright PCS learned that Scantron Performance Series indicates student academic level progress; therefore, it only shows the academic progress the student makes over the school year to close the achievement gaps. Scantron Performance Series is a tool utilized to prepare students for the district standardized assessment. Discovery Education Benchmark is an indicator of the student grade level performance on the District of Columbia Comprehension Assessment System (DC-CAS).

In SY2012/13 Richard Wright PCS implemented a Reading Program with ongoing professional development to address our academic needs in Reading. This will allow students to access the

curriculum and enhance comprehension in every content area. Teachers will teach explicit Reading skills and strategies. We will monitor the DC-CAS data with fidelity to identify our weakest strands in Reading and math then teach the needed skills.

To address our immediate needs during the first couple of years we used the Scantron Performance Series and Discovery Education data to group the students according to their academic strengths and weakness for Math and Reading during Academic Camp. That said, RWPCS will continue to be reflective and practice in its approach to close the achievement gap and nurture the whole child.

C. Unique Accomplishments

Throughout the academic school year 2012-13, Richard Wright Public Charter School for Journalism and Media Arts achieved various, and unexpected, unique accomplishments and awards. From professional organizations in the media industry, distinguished colleges and national educational associations, to an end of the year multimedia gala event, Richard Wright as a school and Richard Wright students received accolades and earned awards for achievement in the inaugural school year.

Early in the year, RWPCS was invited by one of our primary partners, Prime Movers Media (PMM) at the George Washington University, to attend a kick-off event of one of PMM's partners, the White House Correspondents Association. Richard Wright students had the opportunity to participate in a press conference style question and answer session with a distinguished panel of White House Correspondents covering the Presidential Campaign. The group of RWPCS students consisted of eighth and ninth graders who had no experience in a professional journalistic environment. Seniors and juniors from other area schools, such as Schools Without Walls and Duke Ellington, were the other participants.

Although a little intimidated by the upperclassmen, our students rose to the occasion and developed complex and thoughtful questions to ask the panel, were fully engaged, and participated with enthusiasm. The professional journalists and PMM staff commented on how impressed they were on our students' questions, enthusiasm, and professional conduct.

Through that first impression and continued excellent representation from our students, RWPCS was consistently asked by PMM to participate and attend various functions throughout the year, including field trips tours with major media industry organizations and discussions with Bureau Chiefs and General Managers from Thomson Reuters and NBC, Washington DC. At the end of the year, at the Prime Movers Media Showcase and Awards ceremony, Richard Wright students earned awards for the creation of quality student media and RWPCS staff received awards for outstanding service to media students from PMM Director, Dorothy Gilliam.

RWPCS hosted a number of distinguished guests throughout the year such as CBS sportscaster James Brown; Richard Wright's direct descendant, his niece Juanita Dolby; documentarian

Charniece Fox Richardson with director, actor, and comedian Rain Pryor; Canadian actor, producer, and DJ Sean Mauricette, aka. Subliminal; and the Washington Informer publisher, Denise Rolark Barnes, highlighting a few exceptional guests. The collective impression of all the visitors we welcomed was always positive and led to ongoing relationships which we continue to build. Our students were also invited guests at various media organizations and participated in a number of events city wide throughout the school year.

One of the most notable events Richard Wright students were invited to attend was an evening at THEARC with Civil Rights Icon Congressman John Lewis. Ms. Rolark Barnes, the Informer's publisher, spoke to Richard Wright students earlier in the year, prompting the Informer to engage our students to write letters to organizations and individuals that inspired them and supported a cause they felt passionate about. The letters reflected the inspiration a young John Lewis had felt and subsequently wrote to Dr. Martin Luther King asking to meet him and what he could do to help the Civil Rights Movement.

On April 19, 2012, Richard Wright students, staff, and parents, occupied the entire first row as special guests and a captivated audience as Congressman John Lewis moved and inspired all who attended with stories and details of his life as a civil rights activist continually striving for peace through nonviolent means. At one point during his conversation with Ms. Rolark Barnes, Congressman Lewis spoke directly to our students reaching out to a new generation of change agents and young writers.

Ms. Barnes had explained about the letters students had written. The Washington Informer staff selected the top three letters and the writers received monetary awards during the event and received special recognition. As the night drew to a close, Mr. Lewis received his humanitarian award from the Informer and all the students were invited up to the stage to meet Congressman Lewis and have a photo op.

In the Informer's next week's special edition on Congressman John Lewis, the letters and pictures of those students were published on a full page spread. Other mentions of RWPCS appeared throughout the article as well as photos of Richard Wright attendees. Southwest Airlines, a sponsor of that evening, also donated two round trip airline tickets to RWPCS to use for our raffle during the ROXIE Black Tie Arts Gala.

The ROXIE Black Tie Arts Gala was our end of the year red carpet multimedia event that encompassed short films, video packages, live performance, and artwork created by our youth through the various ROXIE classes. The Gala was also held at THEARC in Southeast. The overall outcome of this culminating event was a tremendous and unique accomplishment for Richard Wright. The teamwork displayed from the entire school community - staff, students, families and partnering organizations, created a not only school-wide event, but a community gathering that celebrated our students' outstanding work and creativity.

The Gala marked the end of a phenomenal, inaugural school year and set the standard with great expectations and hopes for the next. Students demonstrated such enthusiasm and love for their school, their teachers, and our leader, Dr. Clark that outsiders attending felt the genuine connection, culture created and instilled at Richard Wright. Several people commented that they had never witnessed or felt that kind of love from students for their school and felt motivated and uplifted from the experience. Although it may seem immeasurable, the consistent positive responses various individuals have expressed, as students of Richard Wright travel and represent themselves and their school, serves as community recognition received.

Students received various awards (Emmys) at the ROXIE Gala in June, but awards from outside organizations were also earned. The High School Journalism Initiative through the American Society of Newspaper Editors hosts online, at my.hsj.org, youth-generated news all over the nation and is “connected to more than 3,800 student news outlets,” of which Richard Wright is one. The National Edition of my.hsj.org is “a widely viewed weekly collection of teen journalism published on the site. This coveted recognition is given out by experts in the field to thoughtful, well rounded journalism produced for the site.”

Two of our students had the honor of being selected for the HSJ National Edition for their articles on RWPCS online publication, *Richard's Words*. One student wrote about a Richard Wright field trip to New York City to be a part of the studio audience at CBS for a live taping of 106&Park featuring guest artist 2Chainz and Kanye West. Another student reported on a visit from the daughter of a Tuskegee Airman who spoke and shared her father's journals and experiences as a Tuskegee Airman.

Even outside organizations such as FOCUS enlisted our students to create a student produced PSA for their organization. Voice of America also sought out Richard Wright and produced a piece highlighting one of our students, his experiences, motivations, and accomplishments at Richard Wright. Part of the unique accomplishments that Richard Wright students experienced throughout the year were the skills they were introduced to, nurtured by supportive teachers, and enhanced by their own passions and creativity to generate and produce their own student media.

Also during the 2012/2013 school year students from Richard Wright had the opportunity to visit NFL Films studio in Mt. Laurel, NJ to watch the filming of Inside the NFL. Richard Wright were gifted this opportunity by CBS sportscaster Mr. James Brown. This field trip experience culminated the broadcasting facets of the Journalism and Media Arts Program.

Overall, RWPCS continues to be a progressive entity in the world of public education. We thoroughly recognize challenges RWPCS is facing and we are certain that collaboration, leadership and re-teaching will ensure that students reach all academic goals.



**RICHARD
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PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL FOR
JOURNALISM AND MEDIA ARTS

Campus: **Richard Wright PCS for Journalism and Media Arts**

Performance Management Framework

1. Average Daily Attendance Rate for July 8, 2013

School Name	12-13 Start Grade	12-13 End Grade	Framework Used	ADA Rate (%)
Richard Wright PCS for Journalism and Media Arts	8	10	ES/MS	92.4

2. School Enrollment as reported in OSSE's
audited enrollment file for the date of
October 5, 2012

202

3. # of Students with Out-of-School Suspensions through July 8, 2013	4. # of Student Expulsions through July 8, 2013	5. # of Mid-Year Withdrawals through July 8, 2013*	6. # of Mid-Year Entries through July 8, 2013
47	0	16	12

Number of days lost due to Out-of-School Suspensions for the entire school through July 8, 2013	Number of enrollment days for all students at the school through July 8, 2013	7. Lost Instruction Time Rate due to Out-of-School Suspensions (%) through July 8, 2013
241	35362	0.68

8A. SY2012-13 Promotion Rate (Grades PK3 – 12)	8B. SY2012-13 Promotion Rate (Grades KG – 12)
97.8%	97.8%

9. In Seat Attendance Rate (entire campus) as of July 8, 2013
90.7

10. # Truant Students (less 18 year olds)	11. # of Students with Out-of-School Suspensions for <u>1</u> day through July 8, 2013	12. # of Students with Out-of-School Suspensions for <u>11</u> or more <u>days</u> through July 8, 2013
42	1	0